

Verbal Practice Section 2: Medium Difficulty

20 Questions
Time: 30 Minutes

For questions 1–6, select one entry for each blank from the corresponding column of choices. Fill in the blank in the way that best completes the text.

1. Cormack McCarthy writes in an idiom both spare and flowery, with paragraphs of short, declarative sentences interspersed with long, _____ passages of description and philosophizing.

boring
floral
baroque
classical
fictional

2. Simony is one of the three primary (i) _____ in Joyce's *Dubliners*, recurring in almost every story in the collection. In some stories, the simony is more or less literal, with characters attempting to purchase salvation with money. In other stories, it arrives in a more (ii) _____ form.

Blank (i) Blank (ii)

theses	spiritual
leitmotifs	pecuniary
characters	figurative

3. Mixed-media artist Mae Chevreton begins each painting by affixing to canvas a photo from her travels, then embedding _____ such as old maps and sheet music before applying paint. The final works, emblazoned with quotes as well as evidence of Chevreton's extensive and wide-ranging travels, convey a sense of joyful _____.

Blank (i) Blank (ii)

devices	philosophy
apocrypha	wanderlust
ephemera	anomie

4. Taxation of legal substances known to be of a (i) _____ nature necessarily threads a thin line; it threatens to (ii) _____ government support for consumption of a product the use of which it is rightly interested in

curtailing.

B lank (i) B lank (ii)

noxious	legitim ize
salubrious	incentivize
hortatory	signify

5.The new spaper’s essay contest soliciting defenses of anti-vegetarianism yielded only a handful of entries that did not allow authors’ (i) _____ to dictate their argum ents: focusing on the seem ingly universal hum an (ii) _____ for consum ing anim al products,these authors successfully navigated the gray area betw een sim ple self-justification and genuine apologia.The successful subm issions argued not so m uch that desire or tradition could justify the current palate,but that the eradication of factory farm ing,the (iii) _____,and the return to natural feed can blunt the evils caused by its excesses.

B lank (i) B lank (ii) B lank (iii)

erudition	penchant	effacem ent of resources
proclivities	salutation	im putation of ecology
tenacity	earm ark	m itigation of suffering

6.The long-term Senator began his career as an unrepentant (i) _____ for his party’s excesses,defending policies w hich posterity has since judged to be reactionary,even (ii) _____;m ore recently he has taken (iii) _____ line,denying that those very policies ever reflected the party’s values.

B lank (i) B lank (ii) B lank (iii)

critic	surreptitious	an analeptic
apologist	acerbic	an unconscionable
appellant	retrograde	a revisionist

Q uestions 7–9 are based on the follow ing reading passage.

The increasing num ber of published scientific studies ultim ately show n to have been based on erroneous data threatens not only reputations of individual scholars but also perceptions of the field as a w hole.Since the general public often interprets such debunkings as evidence of m alicious or conspiratorial intentions on the part of researchers,these incidents

risk being construed as evidence that fraudulent practices pervade the discipline.Such conclusions are rendered all the m ore potent by the **rousing** prospect of exposing hypocrisy in a field that prides itself on its

5 rigor.It w ould therefore behoove interested parties to go to lengths to dem onstrate that such episodes,w hile incidentally regrettable,are not necessarily signs of m alfeasance,and are in fact fully consistent w ith a healthy science.Indeed,the very

practices of hypothesis-testing and scientific replication are in place precisely to redress such concerns.

Spurious results m ay linger briefly in the com m unal ethos,but the m ore attention they garner for their

10 ingenuity and im pact,the m ore likely they are to be subjected to the crucible of attem pted replication.Just as

in a thriving garden, some all weeds may crop up from time to time only to get pulled out at signs of trouble, so too in science do specious findings

15 occasionally attempt to infiltrate the canon only to get uprooted and tossed aside in the end by the inexorable process of scientific natural selection.

7. In the context of the passage, the word *rousing* is used to indicate that:

- (A) scientists often take deep satisfaction in adhering to their own rules.
- (B) people may find the chance to catch others in their own web to be galvanizing.
- (C) scientific non-experts are aware that their criticisms of more specialized areas of study could be construed as exposing hypocrisy.
- (D) uncertainty itself can be something that the general public finds exciting.
- (E) scientific revolutions often happen when most experienced academics least expect them.

Consider each of the answer choices separately and indicate all that apply.

8. The author of the passage would most likely defend which of the following scenarios as instances of “healthy science”?

- ☐ A young researcher discovers an important error in an established text and makes careful note of it in her personal logbook.
- ☐ A highly influential scholar publishes a controversial finding in a well-regarded journal only to be shown by follow-up studies to have inadvertently relied on an invalid statistical method.
- ☐ Unbeknownst to his collaborators, a scientist tweaks his data to be more consistent with a theory that has already won much empirical support.

9. Which of the following best describes the overall purpose of the passage?

- (A) To develop a scientific hypothesis and then describe evidence refuting it.
- (B) To argue that a problem which many people believe to be endemic to a specific domain is in fact much more widespread.
- (C) To encourage more robust dialogue between scientific experts and laypeople.
- (D) To highlight a possible interpretation of a phenomenon and then point out how that interpretation is mistaken.
- (E) To build support for a position, then contend that that position is fundamentally flawed.

Question 10 is based on the following reading passage.

Mayor of Middletown: Two years ago, in order to improve the safety of our town's youth, I led the charge for a law requiring all bicycle riders to wear helmets when riding within city limits. My opponents claim the law is a failure because, last year, we had a higher incidence of bicycle accident victims with severe head injuries than in the previous year. The more important statistic, however, is the bicycle accident fatality rate, which has dropped nearly 30 percent since the law passed. Clearly, the helmet law has been a success.

10. Which of the following, if true, would best support the mayor's claim that the helmet law has been a success?

- (A) If accident victim s do not die as a result of a head injury,they often suffer from perm anent brain dam age.
- (B) W hile only 15 percent of all bicycle accidents resulting in injury occur as a result of a collision w ith a m otor vehicle,those accidents represent 90 percent of fatal accidents.
- (C) In bicycle accidents,injuries to hands,knees,and elbow s are far m ore com m on than head injuries. (D) Typically,fatality rates for bicycle accident victim s w ho sustain serious head injuries are tw ice as high w hen the victim s are not w earing helm ets as w hen they are.
- (E) The effect of the helm et law in M iddletow n is typical;other tow ns also experienced a higher incidence of head injuries but a low er fatality rate.

Q uestions 11–12 are based on the follow ing reading passage.

U ltraviolet radiation (w ith a w avelength in the range of 290 to 400 nanom eters),visible light (400 to 760 nm),and infrared radiation (760 to 3,000 nm) are the three form s of energy that the earth receives from the sun.W ithin the ultraviolet spectrum ,the three sub-categories are U V C (200–290 nm),U V B (290–320 nm), and U V A (320–400 nm).M ost U V C rays do not reach the earth because ozone and other gases in the upper atm osphere absorb them ,but exposure to this type of

- 5 radiation from germ icidal lam ps and m ercury lam ps m ay still be hazardous.Excessive exposure to visible light is also thought to be harm ful,but it is not of extrem e im portance w ith respect to prevention of skin dam age.

M ost skin dam age is caused by U V A and U V B radiation.

The am ount of U V A that reaches the earth is ten tim es greater than U V B ,but the am ount of U V A need to

- 10 produce sunburn in hum an skin is 800 to 1,000 tim es higher than U V B .**N evertheless,U V A intensifies the sunburn effects of U V B through a delayed erythem a and aids in cancer form ation.**Thus,effective sunscreens and sun blocks m ust protect throughout both the U V B and U V A ranges.

C onsider each of the answ er choices separately and indicate all that apply.

11.W hich of the follow ing can be inferred from the passage?

- ☐ A form of energy w ith a w avelength in the range of 2,000 to 2,500 nanom eters w ould not be categorized as ultraviolet radiation.
- ☐ U V B rays cannot cause cancer form ation w ithout the intensifying effects of U V A . ☐ U ltraviolet radiation is not a form of infrared radiation.

C onsider each of the answ er choices separately and indicate all that apply.

12.The highlighted sentence serves w hich of the follow ing roles?

- ☐ provides a factual basis for creating sunscreens and sun blocks w ith certain properties.
- ☐ underm ines an argum ent presented earlier in the passage.
- ☐ suggests that,w ithin the w avelength range of ultraviolet radiation,radiation w ith w avelength low er than 320 nm can exacerbate the carcinogenic properties of radiation w ith a w avelength higher than 320 nm .

For questions 13–16, select the two answer choices that, when used to complete the sentence, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole and produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.

13. Even the most accomplished performers at times have difficulty with some of Rachmaninoff's more perilous passages—the composer seems often to have written his music with the deliberate intent to _____.

- ☐ flummox
- ☐ unnerve
- ☐ retract
- ☐ transmute
- ☐ distribute
- ☐ misalign

14. Americans can scarcely suppose that all 100,000,000 speakers of Indian English are united in error; it is past time that we recognized that distinctively Indian constructions are not _____.

- ☐ fads
- ☐ solecisms
- ☐ idioms
- ☐ dialects
- ☐ pidgins
- ☐ lapses

15. The _____ adventurer Rickard Brownson spends the majority of his autobiography trying to make his life sound like something out of an Indiana Jones movie, but in the end, according to some reviewers, it all comes off rather forced and unconvincing.

- ☐ hapless
- ☐ traitorous
- ☐ self-styled
- ☐ unlucky
- ☐ soi-disant
- ☐ intrepid

16. One of the more bizarre powers of the U.S. presidency is the more or less _____ authority to grant pardons, negating months or even years of criminal litigation in an instant.

- ☐ impartial
- ☐ plenary
- ☐ unbiased
- ☐ executive
- ☐ sweeping
- ☐ tyrannical

Questions 17–20 are based on the following reading passage.

Long regarded as a necessary evil, the royal mistress is a classic staple of the French court. It was hardly a new trick for a monarch to use mistresses and political advisors as scapegoats, but the Bourbons did it with their own particular flare and brand of ceremony. Much of life in the French court was dictated by tradition, ritual, and custom, and the role of the mistress was

5 no exception to this. Mistresses were there to please the king and be the target for unwanted criticism, but they were also expected to stay out of political affairs.

This, of course, was hardly ever the case. The mistresses of Louis XIV, however, were rather well behaved in comparison to those of the future kings. Louis XIV fathered 13 illegitimate children with his mistresses over the course of his life. Thus, his many mistresses were often more concerned with securing rights for their illegitimate offspring than with meddling in affairs of the state. This lack of political meddling made them somewhat less prone to the tremendously harsh scrutiny faced later
10 by those of Louis XV. Additionally, Louis XIV's absolutist rule certainly had much to do with his mistresses remaining in their "proper places." Furthermore, Louis' strict control of the presses kept much of the harshest criticism at bay.

Nevertheless, there was still a steady stream of underground literature and cartoons that demonstrated abhorrence for many of Louis' paramours. What was important about the criticism that did proliferate against
15 his mistresses, however, was that it was used to great advantage by Louis XIV. Indeed, he used it to deflect criticism off of himself. By having an easily disposable female to shoulder the blame for various monarchical mishaps, Louis was able to
20 retain his appearance of absolute control and otherworldly perfection.

There would, however, be consequences for such skillful puppet-mastery in the coming century. Louis XIV was the singular architect of a vast veil of fictive space inlaid between him and his people, creating a dangerous precedent of masterful manipulation that could not be maintained to the same degree by later monarchs. It was clear that Louis XIV crafted this fictive
space cleverly and with great skill, peppering it with self-promoting propaganda to control his image in the collective imagination of his people. His progeny, however, were simply not as adept at doing so. Even more
25 problematic, although future monarchs were not able to dexterously manipulate this fictive space themselves, it did not go away. Instead, it was the satirists, pamphleteers, and playwrights who took over its construction in the years leading up

30 to the Revolution. In short, though it was Louis XIV who wrote his own mythology, Louis XVI would have his written for him.

17. The primary purpose of the passage is to

- (A) critique the morals of the court of Louis XIV
- (B) discuss the popular opinion of French royal mistresses
- (C) contrast the mistresses of Louis XIV and Louis XV
- (D) suggest the main cause of the French Revolution
- (E) describe the utility and flaws of a political tradition

18. According to the passage, all of the following were reasons that the mistresses of Louis XIV were less problematic than those of Louis XV EXCEPT:

- (A) They were more concerned with securing the futures of their offspring.
- (B) There was little freedom for the press under Louis XIV.
- (C) They produced more offspring than did those of Louis XV.
- (D) Louis XIV was a skillful politician.
- (E) They were relatively uninterested in affairs of state.

Consider each of the answer choices separately and indicate all that apply.

19. The passage suggests which of the following?

- ☐ Necessary evils are part of monarchies.
- ☐ Writing one's own mythology can be good statesmanship.
- ☐ Louis XIV viewed Louis XV as an unsatisfactory heir

20. The passage implies that

- (A) Louis XIV made mistakes that led to the Revolution
- (B) Louis XIV was a member of the Bourbon family
- (C) Louis XV wrote his own mythology
- (D) the most troublesome mistresses were those of Louis XVI
- (E) Louis XIV had more mistresses than Louis XVI

Answers to Verbal Practice Section 2

1. **Baroque.** Because the description of “short, declarative sentences” matches up with the word *spare* in the first part of the sentence, you need something in the blank that matches up with “flowery,” meaning “full of elaborate literary words or phrases.” *Boring* is judgmental, and *floral* just means “of flowers.” *Baroque*, meaning “highly ornate and extravagant in style,” fits your sentence.
2. **Leitmotif, figurative.** A theme that reappears throughout a work of art is called a *leitmotif* (simony — attempting to “to purchase salvation with money” — is not a *thesis* in *Dubliners*, nor is it a *character*). You are told that simony is literal in some stories, and then the final sentence begins with “in other stories,” signaling a change in direction. The opposite of literal is *figurative*.
3. **Ephemera, wanderlust.** “Old maps and sheet music” are not *devices*, nor are they fake (*apocrypha*). Rather, they are *ephemera*, printed matter not intended to be saved. If you knew the more common *ephemeral* (fleeting), you could work this out. In the second blank, *wanderlust* describes a love of travel.
4. **Noxious, incentivize.** If the government is rightly interested in curtailing the use of a product, this tells you that the product is somehow harmful, or of a *noxious* nature, so that’s the first blank. (The other words are both positive, and the government can’t have a rightful interest in limiting the use of such products.) By taxing such products, the government gains a profit from their consumption. That the government is *threading a thin line* suggests that there is a conflict: on the one hand, the government then has an interest in increasing profits, on the other hand it has an interest in curtailing the use of the taxed substance. So the problem is that the profit gives the government an *incentive* to encourage use of the product, meaning that the taxes *incentivize* the government to support the product.
5. **Proclivities, penchant, mitigation of suffering.** The clue for the first two blanks is given in the claim that *authors successfully navigated the gray area between simple self-justification and genuine apologia*. *Apologia* means “defense,” so you know that the authors were defending eating meat. But they did not allow their *desires* or *tendency* to eat meat to derail their arguments. The first two blanks require something like “tendency,” and both *proclivity* and *penchant* mean that. The third blank requires something that can “blunt the evils” of eating meat, and that goes along with the eradication of factory farming and the return to natural feed, so you are looking for something that contributes to the well-being of or detracts from the harms done to animals raised for food. *Mitigation of suffering* fits this bill.
6. **Apologist, retrograde, revisionist.** For the first blank, you want a word that means “a defender.” Surprisingly, that’s precisely what *apologist* means (the word *apology* once meant a speech offered to defend or justify). For the second blank, we’d like something similar to “reactionary,” but even stronger and more negative. Since *reactionary* means “opposed to change,” you want a word that means “very opposed to change.” *Retrograde* will do, since it suggests a retreat to some earlier state (the word also has technical meanings in biology, music, and astronomy). The third word describes an approach that recasts history, or challenges a conventional history. That sort of “recasting” is called *revisionist*.
7. **(C).** To properly answer this question, you must first determine who is being “roused.” The beginning of the sentence states that *conclusions are rendered all the more potent*. The group drawing the conclusions is the general public. The implication of the sentence is thus that the general public is eager to leap to conclusions involving malicious intent, and also eager to catch scientists in their own hypocrisy. The correct answer is therefore (C).

8.II only. The author of the passage argues that erroneous findings will be eventually corrected via the process of scientific natural selection through being subjected to scrutiny *the very practices of hypothesis-testing and scientific replication are in place precisely to redress such concerns*. The first statement is incorrect, since there is no such scrutiny — no one else will read the researcher's logbook. The third statement is incorrect because the scientist tweaks his data deliberately — this is more like the "fraudulent practices" described earlier in the passage than the "healthy science" described later — and because no scrutiny takes place.

9.(D). The passage primarily points out that the discovery of erroneous findings *could* be seen as malfeasance by researchers, then goes on to show how these same findings are actually a healthy and natural part of the scientific process. (A) isn't correct because the author does not develop a scientific hypothesis; (C) isn't correct because generating dialogue is not the author's primary concern — it is, rather, to dispel misguided notions.

10.(D). The mayor claims the law is a success because the accident fatality rate has dropped nearly 30 percent since the law passed. Opponents claim the law is a failure because more people have suffered from severe head injuries since the law passed. To strengthen the mayor's conclusion, you need to rebut the opponents' claim, or somehow weaken its effect. While (A) may be true, it does not address the mayor's claim that the helmet law in particular has been successful in its goal to protect bicycle riders. If anything, (A) could weaken the mayor's claim, because the mayor bases the law's success on the lower fatality rate. If those people who don't die instead suffer from permanent brain damage, it is difficult to claim success in "protecting" the population. (B) is tempting because it is a compelling reason why the town might want to enact a helmet law in the first place. The question does not ask you to address this, however; the helmet law has already been enacted. Rather, you need information that will point to the law as a success, and this choice does not provide any information allowing you to assess the success (or failure) of the helmet law. Furthermore, (B) introduces "motor vehicles," which are not mentioned in the argument. (C) may be tempting because the goal of the law is to protect the town's youth, and, presumably, it is desirable to limit all kinds of injuries. There are two problems, however. First, because the focus of the argument is on a helmet law, the focus is also on injuries associated with the area where a helmet is worn: the head. As such, other injuries are out of scope. Second, even if other types of injuries were within the scope of the argument, this choice does not provide any information allowing you to assess the *success* of the helmet law.

Choice (D) is correct — when bicyclists suffer serious head injuries, the chances of dying are twice as high for those not wearing helmets. The converse is that people with head injuries are less likely to die from those injuries if they were wearing a helmet. In other words, the decreased fatality rate is actually responsible, at least partially, for the increase in injuries: some of the injured would have been on the fatality list instead had they not been wearing helmets. This supports the mayor's case by showing that the premise used by the mayor's opponents does not actually indicate a failure in the law. Regarding choice (E), the fact that the results are similar in other towns means merely that the outcome is predictable in some way; it does not necessarily indicate success. In fact, if all towns experienced a sharp increase in fatalities after enacting a particular law, the outcome could be described as typical, but hardly a success.

11.I and III only. You are told that ultraviolet radiation is in the range of 290–400 nm, so energy with a wavelength of 2,000–2,500 nm would not fall in that range (in fact, it would fall into the range of infrared radiation. You are told that UVA rays intensify UVB damage and can aid in cancer formation, but you cannot infer that UVA rays are *necessary* for cancer to form. Finally, since ultraviolet radiation has a wavelength in the range of 290 to 400 nanometers and infrared radiation is in the range of 760 to 3,000 nm, ultraviolet radiation is not a form of infrared radiation.

12.I only. The fact that UVA rays can intensify sunburn and aid in cancer formation "provides a factual basis" for the recommendation in the next sentence, that sunscreens block both UVB and UVA rays. The highlighted sentence does

not “undermine an argument” — in fact, no “argument” exists in the passage, which is informative and factual. Finally, the third statement is the opposite of what you were told: U V A (above 320 nm) “exacerbates the carcinogenic properties” of U V B (below 320 nm), not the other way around. Keep in mind that while it may seem logical that if U V A could make the cancer-causing properties of U V B worse, it would work the other way around — both things cause cancer, after all, right? You should not make this kind of assumption. The question did NOT ask, “What’s true in real life?” It asked what role the highlighted sentence was playing. Make sure you answer exactly the question being asked.

13. **Flummox, unnerve.** You rely largely on the context of the sentence for a hint as to this blank’s meaning. Very experienced performers have so much difficulty with some of Rachmaninoff’s music that it sometimes seems as though the music was *designed* to “confuse, baffle, bewilder,” or *flummox*, or *unnerve*.

14. **Solecisms, lapses.** That which *we can scarcely suppose* is false, so *distinctively Indian constructions* are not errors. The words you want must mean “errors.” *Lapses* mean errors, and *solecisms* means specifically “errors in grammar.”

15. **Self-styled, soi-disant.** The most important words here are *forced* and *unconvincing*, used to describe Brownson’s account of his adventures. That means that Brownson is decidedly NOT Indiana Jones, so you need a word for the blank that will in some way negate “adventurer.” *Soi-disant* and *self-styled* both imply that Brownson may call *himself* an adventurer, but other people might not. *Traitorous* is far too extreme.

16. **Plenary, swiftness.** The key here is that the power to grant pardons can negate months or years of criminal litigation “in an instant.” That implies the power is quick and absolute. Both *plenary* and *swiftness* correctly capture the absolute nature of this power. *Tyrannical* is too judgmental, and *executive* wouldn’t mean much of anything (all presidential powers are, technically, *executive*).

17. **(E).** In the first paragraph, the author outlines the political role of royal mistresses and goes on to discuss the virtues and pitfalls of this system. (A) is incorrect and out of scope, as the author avoids moral judgments. (B) is too narrow; popular opinion is a detail, one of the pitfalls. (C) is wrong because the passage does not contrast the mistresses — about whom there is very little information — but rather their effect on French politics. (D) is incorrect (and too extreme) because the author does not say it was the *main* cause.

18. **(C).** This issue is largely discussed in the second paragraph, which provides support for the other four choices. (C) is correct because, while the author does mention the number of Louis XIV’s illegitimate children, the passage does not mention the number for Louis XV or compare those numbers.

19. **It only.** In the last paragraph, the passage describes the success of Louis XIV by writing his own mythology and compares that to the less satisfactory attempts by his successors. The first statement is out of scope as the author only states that it was a staple of the French court, not all courts. Similarly, no indication is given of Louis’ opinion of his successor.

20. **(B).** In the first paragraph the author states that the Bourbons brought a unique flair to the French custom of royal mistresses. Regarding (A), the passage discusses the success and skill of Louis XIV; mistakes are only attributed to his successors. Choice (C) is unsupported — in the last paragraph, the passage notes that Louis XV did not write his own mythology but Louis XV is not mentioned. (D) and (E) are wrong for similar reasons — the passage compares the number of and problems caused by the mistresses of Louis XIV and Louis XV. But nothing is mentioned in that regard for Louis XVI.